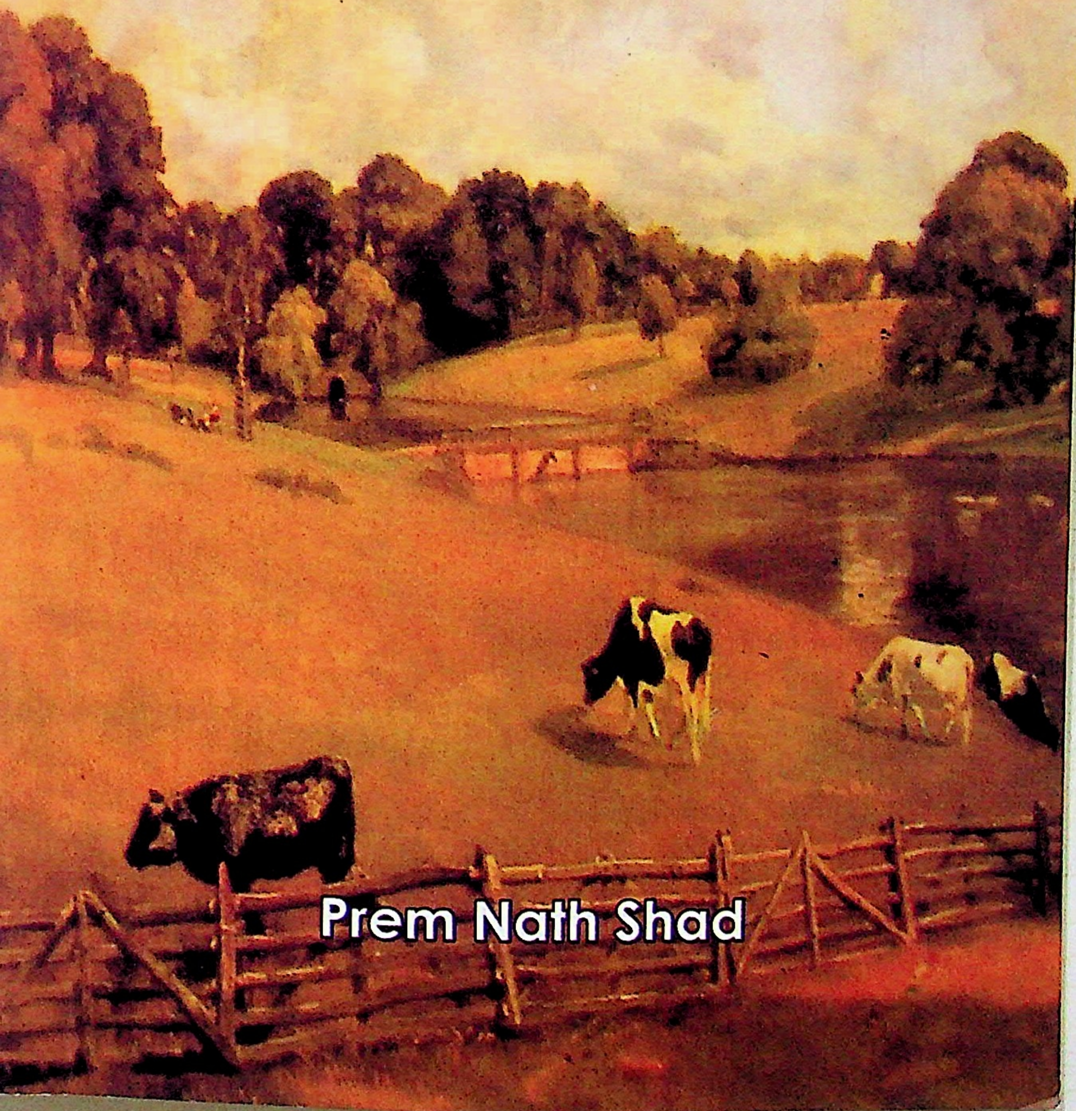
And I Left



Prem Nath Shad

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Prem Nath Shad

Translated from Kashmiri into English by

Arvind Gigoo

Sheena & Vanshi Publications
B-37, Bharat Nagar, Bantalab, Jammu

Books written by Prem Nath Shad:

nav bahar
khun-a-saer karbala
vandana I
vandana II
sarva shuhul
yadan hund adan gaam
posh-i-puza
pot nazar

Year of publication: 2011

B-37, Bharat Nagar,
Bantalab, Jammu.
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Cover painting: *Wivenhoe Park, Essex* John Constable
Courtesy: *Great Painters and Great Paintings* Reader's Digest

For the man whose last word was: Kasheer

To have been born in a world of beauty, to die amid ugliness, is the common fate of all us exiles.

Evelyn Waugh

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Translator's Note

It became impossible for me to recreate the magic, style, architecture, rhythms, tones and the limpid movement of the original. I condensed and altered the intensity, syntax, grammatical systems, diction and sound patterns of the Kashmiri poems. This subversion, deformation and refraction will surely shock the readers. Phrases and word-order that are apt in the original sound ineffective, boring and repetitive here. This exercise to transfer poems from one language to another is my failure, my defeat and my shame.

Introduction

(A note on Shad)

Qazi Bagh, Budgam, Kashmir is lucky for having produced a son like Prem Nath Bhat who was born on April 2nd in 1934. His father, Pt. Sudershan Bhat saw his child grow as a poet. Prem Nath's childhood gave a clue to his father that his son's moods often vacillated. Sometimes he would feel ecstatic and at times he would feel somber. His father understood that 'these are the attributes of a poet in the making'.

Prem Nath published his first book of poems *nowbahar* in 1952. He wrote under the pen-name 'Aajiz'. But his father felt uneasy with this. He wanted his son to lead a happy life. He thought that 'Aajiz' divulged the sad side of life. And thus Prem Nath Aajiz became Prem Nath Shad.

Shad is a soft-spoken man and writes poetry in simple language, understood even by a commoner. His poems are full of pain, love and romance.

In 1990 the political and social atmosphere changed in Kashmir. Everywhere there were bomb-blasts and firing. The scenic Valley changed into a land of bloodshed. And the result was the exodus of Kashmiri Pandit community It was a shock to the poet who was also a teacher. He tried to stay there because Kashmir boosted his poetic inclinations and capabilities. Despite his efforts he was forced to leave. It was a sad scene for Qazi Bag to witness the migration of this poet. Everything changed overnight, and so changed Shad and his flow of poetry. The hostile atmosphere blocked his poetic ability for some time. How long can a poet afford to live without emotional

outpouring? One day he picked up his pen again and started writing. This activity continues unabated.

In 2001 Shad brought out *sarva shuhul* and in 2006 his *yaadan hund aadan gaam* was published. The poems in these books reflect the tragedies of a man in an alien land and the tremendous pain of nostalgia. The emotional poem *ta draas* is one of his best poems about the helplessness at the time of exodus. The poem pricks the emotional chord and brings tears to the readers:

kul garach garveth mansaavam ta draas
vansi hinz arzath tati travam ta draas
laj ashis dadrai jigras chaakh gai
baayi vanij rath panun chavam ta draas
gav travam nale jaafre posh maal
alshi khaj moth akh hochee khavam ta draas
shah andar andrim hatis hankal gayam
kochi manz feki peth nazar travam ta draas.

(Tears roll down my cheeks,
Blows pierce my heart.
I suck my own blood.
I left everything there——
My home, age-old earnings,
The cool touches and ethos.
My throat chokes,
Sighs remain within.
I offered my cow
Handful of dry linseed,
Garlanded her with marigolds.
From the by-lane
I turned a last look.
And I left.)

Due to displacement and living in hostile conditions most of the poems of Shad are related to nostalgia. Uprootedness has given rise to multiple problems in the displaced people, and one among them is the loss of identity. Shad says:

kati waatakh mainis dairas kati moloom karakh
yath shahras manz chuna zaanaan shaadun naavai kanh

(You can't reach me, you can't find me;
Nobody in this city knows me.)

The book *yaadan hund aadan gaam* turned him into an important Kashmiri poet. Shad is a lover of nature and human values. He is conscious of his efforts to reassemble his shattered dreams and damaged ethos.

khabr kya kya korum dewanagi manz
pathar pai pai sandorum tee mashith goi

(I am unaware of my doings in madness;
I regained and collected the bits.
But I forgot.)

Writing romantic poems far away from the beautiful mountains, flowing rivers, chinars, poplar trees, blooming buds, fragrant petals of roses, snow and icicles is a difficult task for a poet. But Kashmir is imprinted in the mind of Shad. Even in the scathing heat he recreates the cool of the Valley through his chiselled words. His cohesive poems have multiple meanings. Sometimes readers are made to think of the 'beloved' Shad talks of. Is it any imaginary being or is it the image of a god or a woman of his dreams? But sometimes he gives a good mixture of all these compositions that make life beautiful. His metaphors and similes are appropriate and appreciable:

wuzmali woshlun khasi asmaanas sangran pholi sonzal
rata khali chashmov nazrah traavas kuni kuni paavas yaad

yali shaad kath wothi lolach husnach yali sholi sham-i-gazal
seemabe shaarov das tulnaavas kuni kuni paavas yaad

(The sky will be crimson, the rainbow will stretch over the mountain,
The vision of my red eyes will catch him.
I will remind him.
Whenever there is any talk of beauty and love,
Whenever the poetic evenings will glaze,
I will make him begin afresh with the mercurial couplets.
I will remind him.)

Shad has tremendous contribution to the literature of exile. There are some untold miseries of the Pandit community. Kashmiri Pandits have learnt how to survive in exile. Shad, like other poets, lives with indelible memories. He likes to register everything in his writings:

panane gam thavzi lekhith lukh paran ma
warq phire phire achan manz osh baran ma.

(People might read and register grief.
Every page will bring tears in eyes.)

In a ghazal he says:

agar justujoo chuv kitaaban saniv
twareekhkan inqilaaban saniv
pazar non kadiv nazar muchrith vuchiv
buthen peth hijaaban niqaaban saniv

(If you have the urge analyze the books
and the historical revolutions
with sense and sensibility.
Bring out the truths and keep your eyes open.
Have a sharp look on the masked faces.)

Shad also writes nazams, ghazals, free verse, etc. Though he has mastery over Kashmiri ghazal but his nazams can in no way be ignored. Kashmir has been the pivot round which most of his nazams revolve. He writes:

grashma tachar ti vayaan
sheen shishur ti prayaan
himaluk thazar ta sheen sangar
khal ta khah
dal ta doore
posh halam
pomprane gath
baalyaaran hind naalmaet....

(Even the scathing heat of Kashmir suits.
Icy snow is liked.
The Himalayan cliffs,
snow-laden mountains,
green fields,
the beds,
the watery terraces,
the dances of the moths,
the lap of flowers
and the embraces of lovers....)

Shad's poetry contains a secular and liberal outlook. Besides leelas, he has a good number of naats and manqabats to his credit. On the one hand he represents his own socio-religious identity but on the other hand he is unable to ignore the concept of universal brotherhood.

har har girdar yan praznovam
khoni lalnovam sham sondar

man sar pamposh zan pholrovam
khoni lalnovam sham sondar

(When I realized who Girdar is,
I began to fondle him.
My inner being bloomed like lotus.)

Shad has written several poems on Eid, Hussain and Islamic faith. *vanadana 1*, *vandana 11* and *posh pooza* are his works in the field of devotional poetry.

Shad's latest book *pot nazar* starts with a multidimensional couplet:

khaab ganj oasum rachith rovam katen
kanh ti soda gov na kharchovum katen

(I had the treasure of dreams preserved. Where is it lost?
There was no transaction. Where did I spend?)

And it ends with *reyi aaya pakh tai gayi barbaad*

(When the ants get wings, they are destroyed.)

Shad has attended many literary conferences within and outside the state. He has also participated in various workshops in Jammu, Kashmir, Punjab and Mysore.

The remarkable quality and attraction of Shad is his melodious voice. While reciting poems his voice mixes with the theme of his poetry and it makes an impressive impact on the listeners. Shad has been honoured and awarded many times for his contribution to literature.

One of his poems *maj chi akhar maji aasaan* makes the readers very emotional. It is a tribute to a mother who sacrifices everything for her child. The poem leaves us thinking about the beauty of motherhood.

wachi vushnairas amreth chaavaan
maj chi akhar maji aasaan

ho ho kare kare kochi lalnaavan
maj chi akhar maji aasan
kath hechnaavan pat pat pheraan
andrimi chuki saan sheraan paraan
char har havith chale bale khaivaan
maj chi akhar maji aasaan.

(She feeds with nectar
in her warm bosom.
Fondles in her lap.
Teaches to talk.
Follows and pats.
She bathes and clothes.
By tricks makes her child eat.
She is none but a mother.)

This song, one of his all-time hits, has become a household item. It is sung by Vijay Malla, Deepali Wattal, Ajaz Rah, Haseena Akhtar and Gulzar Ganai. Singers like Waheed Jeelani, Qaisar Nizami, Gulzar Gania, Usha Handoo, Manzoor Sha, Rashid Farash, Hasina Akhtar and Sidharth Koul have also sung Shad's songs.

Rehman Rahi, Amin Kamil, Amar Malmohi, Shad Ramzan, Gulshan Majid, Farooq Nazki, Rattan Talashi, Arjan Dev Majboor, Shahid Badgami, Mushtaq Muntazir, A R Nazki, R L Shant, Farooq Fayaz and others have written about his poetry. A documentary on Shad has also been filmed which gives a brief account of his life and poetry.

By translating thirty Kashmiri poems of Arjan Dev Majboor (*Waves*), one hundred vaakh of Bimla Raina (*The Silence Within*) and thirty short poems, viz, *haresaat* of Dina

Nath Nadim into English Arvind Gigoo introduced them to the English knowing readers. In *And I Left* we find the English rendering, in free verse, of thirty poems of Shad. I confess that the translations are not faithful to the originals, perhaps, because it is impossible to translate poetry from one language into another. Gigoo has taken liberties with the originals. He has even given his own titles to the poems. He is true to the Italian saying 'Translators are traitors'. Here also he has 'ignored the rhythms and movement of the originals, interpreted and paraphrased their structural, syntactic and linguistic intricacies'. The readers will themselves judge their veracity. But the Translator's Note shows Gigoo's honesty, courage and self-critical attitude.

To sum up I think that Shad is a Kashmiri poet of substance and that Gigoo has tried to allot him a place in a different world.

Adarsh Ajit

Jammu
July 2011

ho bu kare kare kahi lalnaavon
mai chi akhar maijyaan
kath heechinaavyan pat pat pheraan
andrimi chuki snan sheraan pazaan
chor har havith chaje bale khunaan
mai chi akhar mai naavan

(She feeds with nectar
in her warm bosom,
Fondles in her lap,
Teaches to talk,
Follows and pats,
She bathes and clothes,
By tricks makes her child eat,
She is none but a mother.)

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And I Left

Curse

She leaned against the wall
but
did not cry
did not smear her face with blood
did not tear off her garment.

Who buried the dead man
and
where?
The smell of blood
merged
with the wind.
Dust unto dust.

The faceless and merciless
time
invented exile.
I didn't reach you,
you didn't reach me.

The doors
are ajar;
the ceiling, the roof, the windows
are nowhere.

Justice became the kill,
enquiry tumbled
into a ditch.
What!
Somebody replaces somebody.

They made dry promises.
Flatteries were false
and
images lies.
You passed through
the eye of the needle
but
desired a wide gate
to exit.

The dark moonless heavy night
lengthened
into boredom.
It was the curse of evil.
A true happening.

Death has various shapes—
martyr,
terrorized into everlasting sleep,
butcher's act.

***

Exile

My land,
i am restive.
Loneliness,
distance
and
separation
are unbearable
When do i see you?
My eyes are tired
and
heavy.

Youth, zest and warmth
are frozen,
the frenzy of colours
and glory
is gone.

My body is here,
soul is in you.
Longing for you, dear,
consumes me.

I am walking on
the sunstruck road
behind the mountain
and
singing the spring-tune
for you.

This darkness,
this thunder
this whirlwind
will go.
For you He will change
seasons..

My heartbeat whispers:
'You will reach there.'
I hold my life
in my grip.
I capture you.

I write for joy.
The 'i' in me
is joyless.
Absence is the cause.

***

Village

My village
rests in my eyes.
The golden morning,
the bright light
and
the kohl-evening
sit in my look.

Look travels to
the Damodar plains,
the fields,
the trees
and
the greenery.

I see
houses, sheds, baker's shop,
shingles,
thatched roofs,
the wooden planks.

I see
pears, apples, apricots,
pomegranates, walnuts,
almonds.

I see fresh roses,
fragrant marigolds,
bluebells, buds.

I see that water
—my nectar—
springs,

waterfalls,
fountains
and
the life-giving breezes.

The message of new life
and new youth
is written
in my eyes.

Eid,
Hearath,
Navroz,
—greetings—
priceless days of love,
of oneness
are in my look.

I see:
Budgam
en route to Chrar
two miles ahead
half an hour
journey from my village
to Srinagar.

These images
are
the meaning of my life—
my reason.

They comfort
my look
in the scorching heat.

***

Fire

Listen,
there is fire,
wild fire.
Stop it
otherwise the city
will burn,
will be ash.

If water gets angrier
the cobbled paths
and
the crossings
will perish.

The hidden word
should not
flow with the water
—consciousness—
otherwise
the oar shall be useless.
The buds
will petrify;
even the shade of the cypress
will end in smoke.
The splendour of the good
will be
auctioned;
the known
will be dust;
gold will change into brass;
the beads of the necklace
will scatter;

purity will be defiled;
truth will disfigure
into untruth;
the world will mock;
darkness will strangle
light;
hope-mansion will crumble.

Don't auction love;
don't stone beauty to extinction.

If the robe of Lal is stained
Nund will not forgive.

***

Mirror

Where are
my treasured
dreams?
Where did i spend
when
there was no sale?

I saw the blush
of the flowers;
the young buds
did not
bloom.

Couldn't live!

The vastness of luck,
the shells of the seas!

The knot loosened
and
the pearls rained
here and there.

The face is a web
—distorted,
irregular,
ugly,
awkward.

The life-size mirror
cracked
into
splinters.
Where?

Do the sane know
where it is now?
It was
here
just now.

It was an admixture
of pride and courage;
the destination is visible.

Where did my step
fall?
An illusion!

I remember
the chill of winter
and
the sound.

I am the sweat.
I want to cool my body
under the chinar.
Where?

***

Sign

We fled
from
the places.
The places are there,
the dwellings are empty.

We got lost
in the alien cities,
we lost our signs.

The shades
were
disfigures.

Brothers parted.

The graves
opened mouths
to bury
our signs.

Who went.
Where?

We tramped
and
couldn't be traced.

A number—
a new sign—
was

fixed
outside the tent.

We kept standing
on
our feet
with the bundles
on
our heads.

We changed
our signs
outside the others' houses.
Rent!

Each moment
is
our judgment day.
Hopelessness
rules
our living.

We wept long weeps.
Our signs
wept.

We lived
with the hollow pockets,
we gulped
poison,
we gave away
signs.

The signs
live
in our dreams.

We haven't forgotten
the signs.

The journey of the mind
is
the walk
of the ascetic.

The foggy mind is alone.
We have lapped
the signs.

***

Waiting

I wait for:
the shade of the chinar,
my tranquil birthplace,
the changing seasons,
the bewitching colours,
autumn,
spring,
winter,
summer,
the water of the melting snow flow into
tremulous streams,
the dancing holy water,
the river,
the Aharbal waterfall,
the singing
doves,
kastoor,
pigeons,
orioles,
bulbuls,
parrots,
the green meadows.
the almond alcove.
tulips,
asters,
saffron fields,
liquid mornings,
kohl-evenings.
the midday sun,
the dreams,
the hopes,
the laughter,

the play,

love,
life-giving dwelling,
the innocence on the brow,
neighbours, friends,
the warm sanity,
and the smiles.

I will wait till end.

***

Mirage

I am the flower
and
you are the dot.
If the heart
splits
you will throb.

I did not claim
my cottage
and
my existence.

Yours are
the horizon
and
the shade;
yours are
the earth
and
the time.

Don't jeer at
drunken frenzy
and
the intoxicating lostness
of consciousness.
Style is charm.

The heat
crossed the line.
You were the cause of
madness.
The cloud

—a tramp—
spread
the mist
and
dyed the flowers grey.

Nothing can
cheat my vision
even when
you are seated
on
the mountain.

I will ask
and
you shall have to
answer.

The mirage will not last long.
The day may favour you
but
the illusion will end
in the night.

The wet rainbow
dangles
from the hair.
Beauty is colour.
Love is carving the word.
The magical look is hard.
Thought is chained.

Conscience lisped:
'Read the brow;
fate is writ large there.'

***

Your Shadow

Have we to carry
this pain-load
for life?
Will the madness of youth
perish
like this?

I am a human being.
Will he
pain
my heart?

The killer's look
rests on me.
I open the window
slowly
and
see shadows walk.
I look for your shadow.

You are my
annihilation.
You put me at stake.

Are my longings to be
poisoned?
You are my
amulet
and
my dream.

Protect the wish of the soul.

I bore
torture
agony
tremor
and
wait.

Don't shame fidelity.

***

Gesture

This gesture
turns
you into
a lyric.

Mind is a surprise
and
thought is devastation.

Your look
makes me
mad.

Movement
is
a miracle.
Whose?

Clue
is
invisible.
Even work.

Virgin trust
is
heart's satisfaction.
You are
the images
in the mirrors.

My existence
is

your slave.
Pen
and
paper
lie in your hand.
A boon from God.
You author
my fate.

At dawn
fragrance sleeps
in the lap
of the rose.
The air is aroma.

You step
and
the scene excites.

My longings
are
young
for
your image
lies
in me.

You are
my open book;
you live
in poems.

***

Earthquake

Mark,
this age has lost its face,
there is no footprint on the earth,
the arm does not reach the sky.

This epoch
is catastrophe.
Existence
is an earthquake.
Pythons
search for people.
Messengers of death
drag the bodies.

Nature offered its gifts—

The eye of evil
broke
the images,
stones hit the mirror,
the wind
trapped
the high,
heritage
lost its glory,
the boat
—desires—
is caught
in the whirlpool.

When we
looked upward
they frightened us.

They called a mound
mountain.
"You,
there is no time.
Don't explain
anything.
Shut up."

Trust turned into
betrayal.

My worry is
our tomorrow.
Photo finish
is
life-in-death.

This is the test.

***

Danger

Everything is on fire,
living is in danger.

The wind is venom,
man is at stake.

Stars are hidden,
the sky is overcast.

The river overflows,
the fearful shadow carries a sword.

The dark streets are thorny,
the snakes are coiled.

The calm courtyard was destroyed,
in a moment we lost the place.

Each day is death,
each night is torment.

Cool breath got stuck,
man is in fright.

Birds are nowhere,
the pine-forest has fallen.

Cypress trees are hanging,
acid flows from the springs.

The water of Dal is boiling,
the eyes of the deer show pain.

Dreams are ash,
fog blocks vision and clouds look.

(The skylark fell.)

Hope plays inside and assures living.
The smiles will be born.

***

Pain

Fearful silence
is
all around.
The pain grows.
None hears the call.

The daffodil
through pitiful eyes
weeps
blood.
The rose
out of pain
is hysterical.

The dove,
the pigeon,
the swallow
and
the kastoor
cry
pain.

The whole is condolent.

Seasons,
days,
nights,
mornings,
evenings,
are alien.
Even time lost balance.

The thievish key
opened the lock
in
stealth.
They stole
our thoughts.

Our fellows
turned
callous.

Listen,
since times cheated ánd flew
repentance will rule man
for ever.

***

The Night-Dreams

The night-dreams
cool
the burning heart even today
and
lull one to sleep
in the desert.

Words fly over
the meandering ways
behind the Panchal.

The night-dreams
trim this distance.

The white pure shining moments
were divine gifts.
Time
was
colour and beauty.

The night-dreams
refresh remembrances.

Longing and sparkling hope
throb
under a thick covering.

When lifted
one sees
the image of the longing
in the night-dreams.

The honeyed look
and
the cool of the dew
become ours.

At times
the night-dreams
offer venom.

The night-dreams
evoke
infancy,
childhood,
youth
and
the comforting world.
Old age brings tears.

One moment
Shad has miracles of nature in sight.
Another moment whips the heart to gallop.

***

Today

The flame shone in the forest
yesterday.
Today is blank.

The chinar-canopy stood by
the spring
yesterday.
Today it is nowhere.

The divine goblets are in hands;
wishes are tied to the robe.

Tilaks shone on the brows of the fairies.
Today nothing is.

With eyes closed the innocent infant
in the lap sucks milk from breast.

A dog was born near a snow-mound yesterday.
Today is hollow.

When the sun rose
the tops of the trees shook.

Yesterday we picked up
the walnuts pushed by
the parrots.
Today nothing happens.

Who stole the winks of the stars?
Who covered the face with mist?

Yesterday the moon bathed in gold.
Today disappearance reigns.

The dance of the wind
gave me sweetness.

Yesterday the threads
wove charming dreams.
Today nothingness spread.

***

Soil

The soil said:
Walk,
step upon me.
You are mine.

Strange!
Your hair is white,
your forehead is furrowed,
specs guard your eyes.

Sit.
I want to stare at your face
and
read from your book.

Ninny,
i am your mother.
I bore you,
you opened your eyes in my lap,
you sucked at my breast,
i lulled you to sleep,
smiles frisked upon your lips,
i kissed you.

Listen,
pick me up,
smell me,
i will again mother you.

You left me.

You saunter in wilderness.
Your soles
have stuck to the roads.

I know everything.

Don't think
i was placid.
Look at these stains.
I am wounded,
i am soaked in blood.

I swallowed blood.

The patch under the pyre
is burnt,
graves are lined.

I listened
to the orphans
and widows.

I know
you will leave me again
to
loneliness.
I shall thirst
and
run my tongue
over my lips.

I will go on
gazing
at your shadow.

***

And I Left

I entered the sanctuary,
bowed
and
poured milk
upon the lingam.

I kept
my belongings there,
saved my honour,
handed over the keys to—
and
left.

It was neck-breaking speed.

Tears flowed;
chest became a seieve.

I offered linseed
to my cow,
put a garland of marigolds,
i chained the ankles
of the new-born calf,
kissed him
and detached myself from him

It was dawn.
Water had frozen
and
the air was icy.

I kept the cool-filled
Kangri there
and
left.

My breath froze,
throat stuck.

I looked askance.

Fear,
fright,
helplessness
and
mob-frenzy
strengthened my heart.

And I left.

***

Being

The 'I' said:
'Open.'

Being was heavy.

Word reaches me the word.
Real is distant,
bottom is my goal.

The 'I' said: 'I am.'

World — different.
Climate — different.

Hell is this eye.

The 'I' whispered: 'You are.'

The crowds wander.

Word is away from essence.

Each
unknotted the knot.

The 'I' said: 'Be.'

He listened
and
consciousness awoke.

The half-shut flower
flowered,
wiped the mirror.
The true happened.

The 'I' said: 'Awake.'

The blind don't count
the leaps.

I don't measure
measure.
Word sinks into Being.
The 'I' said: 'Arise.'

***

Separation

The shadows of our wishes
stuck to our faces.
Love cleaved,
wound up.
It is no longer there.

I carried separation.
Commotion was the fruit.
We got this solitariness
and the flaming sun.

The smiles from our lips
were peeled,
sorrow became
our fate.

In winter
we protected dreams;
there was a fall,
the dreams fell.

The roads are blocked;
the words face a bar.
The supportless bodies
are
a devastation.
Heat is the cause.

Promises are hollow.
Youth is on
the altar.

Goons robbed
my conscience.
We saved hopes.
Heart is an icicle.
It oozed
blood
and
tears.

***

Lamp

Dreams were
misgivings for the night.

It was a mad
restlessness—
the anguish of
distance.

The sword flashed
for the night.
The double-edged weapon
is hanging.

Pushed sorrow
and
killed dear longings.

I asked for
one look,
i unlatched the doors
and opened
the windows.

I gripped my
heart for the night.

The lamp shone
on
the stand.

The mind loafs
in troubles
in shadows.

This lamp is
a fellow-traveller.

At daybreak
i saw
the weep of the roses.
Does she feel this?

***

If

What will you say
if
you see the eclipsed moon,
if
the rainbow colours are tainted,
if
burns appear on the body of youth,
if
termite eat up shahtoos shawl,
if
the cypress and the pine are uprooted,
if
flower-bed hugs fire,
if
drinking holy water is banned,
if
you want to know how infants will quench the thirst,
if
you think of the desires feeling restless in the fists,
if
the tears well up in the eyes,
if
you see garments torn to shreds,
if
words betray you
if
the sweetness of the songs ends?

***

Nothing

Picked up the axe
and
axed me.
Nothing else.
I
hid
storm in my breast.
I
will
breathe out only sighs.

She is to leave.
I
will say: Leave.

I
will
demand one last look.
Nothing else.

I
know
i drank
a cup of poison
with eyes closed.
Nothing else.

Ideas
and
comfort-giving dwelling!

The zestful city
of
dreams
is buried.
Nothing else.

Which word
defines
this relationship?
The madness
of
love.
Nothing else.

The goal
is
not visible.
There is
no resting-place.

I
see
fog,
lightning
thunder
cloudburst.
Nothing else.

***

Tomorrow

The earth beneath the feet
is
slipping.

Each step
looks for
caution.

Mountains
are
thunder;
forests
are
fog.

How to touch the sky?

The flight
is
faceless,
air
is cool,
each hair
an icicle.

The lamp
doesn't burn
in the gathering,
the path to
rendezvous
is
desolate.

Veins
quiver,
pulse
is
fast.
The throbs
of the heart
have
no rhythm.
The nib
is
under weight.
They prosecute
words.

Who to ask?

We are silent
and
itch
the ear.

Speak out the riddle.

The
walls
eavesdrop;
the air
is on the prowl.

Protect
each page.
Tomorrow
will
remember
today.

***

Light

Moth,
circle around the flame.
She will show you
her face.
Offer your self to her.

Rein consciousness,
the recesses of your heart
will
shine.

Watch the true
in the true,
you will be you
and the treasure
will reveal.
You will see her.

Tighten the fist,
jump into the ocean,
be hers,
annihilate the self,
catch the garment
of the medium.

Face will face you.

Wet the soil
with
blood,
rainbow will be yours,
light will emerge

out of
blackness.

Her brightness
will
wash you.

Test goodness
on
the touchstone,
cleanse I-ness,
wash the chest.

You will be One.

Shoulder the load
to
reach the goal.
Keep the eye open
every moment.

Offer the word
to Her
even when in thought.

She will belong to you.

***

Faces

I went to
where I was not to go;
I waited for the one
who was not to come.

Faces changed.
Friend!
Who?
Foe!
Who?

The cup-bearer has left;
the tavern is empty.
The goblet is broken.

The cobweb veils
the opening
to the world.
My look thirsts.

The night is black;
the stars are hidden.

I stumbled
and
fell down
with the face on the earth.

Somebody stole
the treasured dream.
There was no enquiry.

Bird,
why weave this nest?
They will fell the tree.

The ears were plugged,
the tongue was tied.

Tell him!
What?
Hear from him!
What?

The curtain
was
drawn.
I left
with the dust
clothing
my face.

It was all
haste.

***

Lyric

Lyric is
my love,
solace to soul,
peace,
work.

In each season
it
flourishes
and
refreshes.

Lunacy is juice.
Love and beauty
are
lightning.

Lyric is
flame.
It sculpts
idols
and
clothes words.

It is
Pasham
Shahtoos
Silk.
Each day
it lives
among
the high and the low.

It is touching,
it has no replica.

Time didn't
shrink
its cloak.

It speaks
thought,
idea,
feeling.

The strings play a melody.

Lyric is
the flow of the river.
It is the fall of water.

***

Love

One love-look!
The wet roses will be
yours.

Enquire.
I will answer.

Mine was
a love walk
in
wilderness.
It was a dark journey.

I counted
the stars
I will tell you
the number.

My feet are on the earth;
my eyes are towards the ether.

Your ears?
I offer virgin dreams.

The spring-breeze
deserted me;
the flowers
did not catch
the flowers;
they came to life
in the shadows.

The sun is absent;
my youth is white
or
colourless.
It is yours.

I swallowed
my tongue
and
chiselled words.

Blood
will be my book.
My gift to you.

***

Hope

The rain will
put out the fire;
the season will change;
the cool will rule;
spring-fragrance will prevail;
we will show our chests
and
watch the colourful flowers.

All will laugh;
the birds perched
on the window-blades
will sing;
people breathe out
goodness;
oneness will flourish;
love will bloom;
the full moon will
smile;
stars will shine
in the sky;
the sunshine will
brighten all;
dew drops will be pearls;
comfort and peace
will
reign when the inner

turmoil goes.
Again
the honeyed world
will

come;
love songs will resound
when
the plectrum
strikes the strings;
the instrument
will sing
each word
each poem
each song.

***

Cool

I read
the cool
in history;
i write
the cool
with embers.

Eyes watch
images.

I pray for the cool.

The midday sun
says in rage:
'I have seen you.
So I compress
the cool.'

Words are pell-mell;
melody is a stranger;
its face is turned.

I am walking
on
the tarred road
singing
the cool;
i yell
in the market;
i sell golden dreams
and
buy the cool.

Here the fire
engulfs all;
there they laugh
the cool.

He remembers
my
wounded
hot
body
when he sees
the cool.

***

Mother

The warm lap is the cradle.
She fondles
suckles
lisps words
shadows
showers love.
'The sparrow is there,
eat.
The mynah will come,
eat.
I am you.
You are me.'

She plays with hair,
cools sweat,
offers heart,
measures with fingers.

Her arm is the pillow.

She doesn't let
the bee near you,
bleeds for you
flies away
the fly.
Her look
travels from
shadow
to
gesture
to
shade.

She lifts her hands
towards
the sky
and
prays—
herself being
a goddess.

She is the ocean.
Heaven
is
at her feet.
She makes Him
remove fear.

Remember her
sacrifice
kindness
nobility.
Don't break her heart.

She shapes
you
into man.

Know her;
happiness will be yours;
worries will sink;
you will rise;
her word for you
will last for ever.

***



Prem Nath Shad

Prem Nath Shad has attained, in contemporary Kashmiri literary circles, a dignified position as a poet who demands attention. He has achieved a recognition which, during the last thirty years, has been achieved only by a few Kashmiri poets.

Rehman Rahi

Prem Nath Shad's poetry is marked for his sensitivity to issues that are personal and social simultaneously. His lyrics are resplendent with his personal emotional relationships told in a smooth and vibrating language. That speaks volumes about his concern for the land and people he belongs to. There is a natural merge between his private and public worlds, that comes live in Shad's poetry in a genuinely fresh language and idiom.

R L Shant

Shad's poetry captivates the reader. His depiction of village life, its simplicity and nature is superb.

Arjan Dev Majboor

Shad handles words with perfect ease in his poetry. For him a verse is not mere thought but a psychological reality. He is a master/ craftsman and knows how to conceal art.

Amar Malmohi

Prem Nath Shad is the Makdoom Mohi-ud-Din of Kashmiri poetry.

Farooq Nazki

Shad's creative art has reached a stage where the poet has carved a niche for himself.

Shahid Badgami

Cover Painting: Wivenhoe Park, Essex John Constable
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Price ₹ 200.00